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PP RUEHRC
DE RUEHBR #0931/01 1311840

ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 111840Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5352
INFO RUEHRC/AMCONSUL RECIFE PRIORITY 4746
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 2044
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO PRIORITY 6926
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0125
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 0084
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 0107
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1488

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 000931

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/BSC AND BPOPP
STATE FOR S/GAC/JKOLKER AND MDYBUL
STATE PLS PASS TO HHS/OGHA FOR BSTEIGER
STATE FOR IO/T
STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/SAM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KHIV](#) [KIPR](#) [TBIO](#) [KSCA](#) [EAID](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL'S MINISTER OF HEALTH RESPONDS POSITIVELY ON FUTURE BILATERAL COOPERATION

REFS: A) STATE 054354, B) 2005 BRASILIA 2729, C) BRASILIA 858

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Charge Phillip T. Chicola delivered the demarche on cooperation on HIV/AIDS and other areas (ref A) to Brazil's Minister of Health Jose Agenor Alvares da Silva on May 9. The Charge referenced former Health Minister Saraiva's proposals for increased bilateral collaboration offered during his visit to the United States in February 2006 and noted the stark contrast between the positive bilateral agenda proposed by Minister Saraiva and the subsequent negative attacks against U.S. policy on HIV/AIDS and prostitution delivered by the (now former) Director of the Brazil HIV/AIDS program, Pedro Chequer. Minister Alvares da Silva stated that the proposals made by former Minister Saraiva regarding collaboration with the United States are the only official position of the Ministry of Health, and still reflect its objectives. The Minister added that the statements made Chequer reflected only Chequer's personal views and were made as a private citizen, and that his statements did not represent the views of the Government of Brazil (GOB). Minister Alvares da Silva expressed his ministry's desire to move forward on bilateral health collaboration and focus on the areas in which cooperation is possible. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) On May 9, Embassy Brasilia Charge d'Affaires Phillip T. Chicola delivered ref A demarche to Brazil's Minister of Health Jose Agenor Alvares da Silva. In addition to the Minister, the meeting was attended by Chief of International Relations Santiago Alcazar; Director of the Brazilian National HIV/AIDS Program Dr. Mariangela Simao and the Director of the Department of Distance Learning, Department of Education, Espartaco Madureira Coelho. Accompanying Charge Chicola was Embassy Health Counselor Patricia Norman and Special Assistant Jared Banks.

¶3. (SBU) While the atmosphere at the meeting was welcoming, the conversation was initially, and intentionally, somber, reflecting the seriousness we attach to the issues. In delivering the message, Chicola emphasized that the good will established by the positive message of former Health Minister Saraiva, who proposed increased bilateral cooperation during his visit to the United States in February 2006, was shattered by the subsequent negative attacks against U.S. policies on HIV/AIDS and prostitution made by the former Director of Brazil's HIV/AIDS program, Pedro Chequer. The attacks were so aggressive that, in effect, they blocked any possibility for a real dialogue on the issue. Given that negative attitude, Chicola asked the Minister to clarify the Ministry's position on future bilateral cooperation on HIV/AIDS and other

areas.

¶4. (U) In response, Minister Alvares da Silva said he wanted to make three points. First, the Minister stated that the proposals put forward by former Minister Saraiva are the official position of the GOB's Ministry of Health, and that nothing had changed in that regard. Second, the Minister said that the statements made by Pedro Chequer did not represent neither the GOB's nor the Ministry's views and were made in his capacity as a private citizen. Those statements, the Minister repeated, do not reflect the policy of the GOB. Third, the Minister stated that Brazil would like to move forward in the areas of mutual interest, including those suggested by former Minister Saraiva (noted in reftel) and HIV/AIDS. Dr. Coelho said Brazil wants to sustain work in the areas of cooperation we have already established and put the past behind us. He stated that in the future, the GOB would exercise caution when speaking out about areas in which our policies differ and maintain the focus on areas where we can work together.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: Although the demarche began on a somber note, the response by the Ministry was unexpectedly positive and encouraging. They stated that the "smoke had blown over" and now it was time to focus on areas in which we can cooperate. This message was further reinforced when the same day the Ministry announced that it had come to an amicable negotiated settlement with Gilead Sciences, a U.S. supplier of HIV anti-retroviral drugs to the GOB. A mere twelve months ago, Chequer (and other Ministry officials) had threaten Gilead, Abbott Labs, and Merck with compulsory licensing of their products if the companies did not share their formulae with the GOB (ref B). With an agreement with Abbott Laboratories already in place, it now only remains for the Ministry to come to an accord with Merck -- though Merck's Sao Paulo-based reps seem confident that this will eventually occur.

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¶6. (SBU) The Minister's excuse for the former HIV/AIDS director's comments are weak and, in fact represent a fundamental problem that exists at all levels of the GOB -- the inability (or unwillingness) to enforce internal discipline, especially when it comes to the public airing of policy differences. The most recent example being a public argument between the Foreign Minster and President Lula's National Security Advisor about aspects of the Bolivia problem.

¶7. (SBU) In an effort to further distance themselves from the former HIV/AIDS director, post was told informally that Chequer was actually on loan from the United Nations, with one hundred percent of his salary paid by that organization. In the end, the damage was done and, as Chicola informed the Minister, the USAID HIV/AIDS program will be discontinued. Minister Alvares da Silva's was given an interim appointment, and it is rumored that his brief tenure is coming to a close. Post has no sense at this point of who might replace him. Nevertheless, we were encouraged by their strong statements of putting the past behind us and strengthening our cooperation in areas of mutual interest. END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) Post seeks guidance from Washington on future engagement with GOB on this issue.

CHICOLA